How to tell a sheep from a goat

by Rev. Susan D. Imus

My dictionary defines a Christian as "one who professes belief in the teachings of Jesus Christ". But professing a belief in Christ is not the same as living according to His teachings. By the dictionary's standard a person need not be saved in order to be a Christian, and not all Christians are necessarily saved.

In Matthew 25:31-46 there is a vivid picture of the day when Christ has returned to sit on his throne of glory. Gathered before him are "all the nations", that is, each and every immortal soul of mankind. These souls constitute the flock of our good Shepherd, and He will judge them on that day. Some, the sheep, will be saved and some, the goats, will be bound for the eternal fire.

And what is the difference between the two?

The sheep have succored Christ, in the person of even the least of his brethren, by feeding the hungry and giving drink to the thirsty, by welcoming strangers and clothing the naked, by visiting the sick and those who are in prison.

The goats have done none of these things.

Sisters and brothers! There are those who may tell you that the only thing necessary for your salvation is to believe on Jesus Christ and welcome Him into your heart as your personal Lord and Savior. But I wonder, can they tell you the difference between a sheep and a goat?

By their fruits ye shall know them.